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2017 WINTER SESSION STATE OF THE NAVAJO NATION

WINDOW ROCK – President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez delivered the State of the Navajo Nation Address today during the opening of the 2017 Winter Session. The 23rd Navajo Nation Council voted 16-1 to accept the State of the Navajo Nation Address.

President Begaye opened his address by congratulating all the newly inaugurated Navajo Agency officials as well as the recently elected State Senators and State Representatives.

"Great leaders think about the unborn generations and prepare for them. We must always think about the future," he said. "We must also promote family values and a return to kinship as the core of our families."

The address focused on all aspects of the Four Pillars of the Begaye-Nez Administration: Veterans, Elders and Youth, Job Creation and Infrastructure.

In talking about Veterans issues, the president touched upon the recent internal audit of the Department of Navajo Veterans Administration Veterans Housing Program. The internal audit revealed deficiencies stemming from mismanagement that took place in the previous administrations.

"We will be taking necessary steps to address any deficiencies or mismanagement through a corrective action plan," President Begaye said. "We are working with Home Depot to identify invoices and track past expenses."

Many of the Council Delegates also had questions about the future plans for trans-



Vice President Jonathan Nez (left) and President Russell Begaye delivered the State of the Navajo Nation Address today before the opening Winter Session of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council. The address focused on the accomplishments of the administration in accordance with the Four Pillars.

portation, economic development, infrastructure projects, the Veterans Audit and Navajo Generating Station.

"Bus routes are a big priority for the Navajo Nation to ensure the safety of our children, especially when the weather is increasingly abundant causing many of the students to trek long distances to get on their bus for school. It was said that the Trump administration will be creating an infrastructure plan for the United States," said President Begaye. "We will be working with them to put Navajo Nation road improvements in that plan."

The use of the Diné language was strongly advised during the council session. The Office of the President and Vice President combined youth and elders into one pillar in an effort to bridge that intergenerational gap so that future generations are resilient and teachings are passed on.

"We need teach our young people how to overcome tough times. Suicide rates are high for our Navajo youth but when we help them connect with their families and culture, they too can overcome adversity," said Vice President Nez.